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ABSTRACT

Most research on transformational leadership has used the multifactor leadership questionnaire (MLQ) developed by Bass and his associates. This paper examines the extent to which the MLQ measures the dimensions that it purports to measure in school organization, also assessing the relevance of idealized influence (charisma) in stable school organizations. Previous research has suggested that charismatic leadership would be more likely found in a new and struggling organization. The paper discusses empirical results from previous studies that have used the MLQ. It also presents the results from three studies that examined the conceptual adequacy and psychometric qualities of the MLQ. In Study 1 (Wooderson-Perzan, 2000), a content adequacy assessment of the transformational leadership items was conducted. In Study 2 (Wooderson-Perzan and Lunenburg, 2001) and in Study 3 (Blair and Lunenburg, 2002), a series of confirmatory factor analyses, internal consistency estimates, and correlations were conducted on a revised set of transformational leadership items. The paper concludes that, despite the MLQ's shortcomings, it does identify several leader behaviors that appear to be components of transformational leadership. It finds empirical support for three behaviorally oriented dimensions of transformational leadership that are consistent with theoretical propositions (intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and inspirational motivation). (Contains 24 references.) (SM)

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Running Head: EMERGING PERSPECTIVES

Emerging Perspectives: The Usefulness of the Construct of Transformational Leadership in Educational Organizations

ED 482 695

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Emerging Perspectives: The Usefulness of the Construct of Transformational Leadership in Educational Organizations.

Overview

Most of the research on transformational leadership has used the multifactor leadership questionnaire (MLQ) developed by Bass and his associates (e.g. Bass, 1985; Bass and Avolio, 1994). Bass proposed that transformational leadership is composed of four dimensions: idealized influence, individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, and inspirational motivation. To date, however, no published study has empirically supported the proposed dimensional structure. Because of high correlations among the four dimensions, the MLQ items have usually been aggregated to form a single transformational leadership scale. (e.g. Bycio *et al.*, 1995; Hinkin and Tracey, 1999; Tepper and Percy, 1994). Moreover, the idealized influence (i.e, charisma dimension) has been particularly troublesome; it has been highly correlated with the inspirational motivation scale (e.g. Hinkin & Tracey, 1999; Yammarino and Dubinsky, 1994).

The purpose of the current study is twofold. First, I will examine the extent to which the MLQ measures the dimensions that it purports to measure in school organizations. Second, I will assess the relevance of idealized influence (charisma) in stable school organizations. Bass (1985) suggested that charismatic leadership would be more likely to be found in a new and struggling organization. I will begin by briefly discussing the literature on transformational leadership. Next, I will discuss the empirical results from previous studies that have used the MLQ. Finally, I will present the results

from three studies examining the conceptual adequacy and psychometric qualities of the MLQ.

Transformational Leadership

Based on the work of Burns and others, Bass and his colleagues (e.g. Bass, 1985; 1990; Bass and Avolio, 1994; Seltzer and Bass, 1990) developed a theory and measure of transformational leadership. In their recent book, Bass and Avolio (1994) proposed that transformational leadership is composed of four dimensions, described as the "Four Is" and measured by the MLQ. The first is *idealized influence* (II; charisma), which is based on a follower's respect and admiration for the leader. Next is *individualized consideration* (IC), the extent to which the leader cares about the individual followers' concerns and developmental needs. Third is *intellectual stimulation* (IS), the degree to which the leader provides followers with interesting and challenging tasks and encourages them to solve problems in their own way. Finally, *inspirational motivation* (IM) is based on communication of expectations and followers' confidence in the leader's vision and values.

A number of studies have demonstrated support for the predictive validity of the MLQ. Bass, Avolio, and their associates (e.g. Bass, 1985; Hater and Bass, 1988; Seltzer and Bass, 1990; Avolio and Howell, 1992) found significant relationships between transformational leadership and subordinate satisfaction with the leader and leader effectiveness. However, there have been some criticisms regarding the measurement qualities of the MLQ. Sashkin and Burke (1990) argued that "the MLQ does not adequately incorporate key theoretical elements of transformational leadership..." (p. 301). Bycio *et al.* (1995) and Hinkins and Tracey (1999) stated that acceptance of the

validity of the factor structure of the MLQ is premature. Yukl (1994) argued that some of the items are attributional in nature, not assessing specific leadership behaviors.

The Current Studies

Based on concerns noted above, three studies were conducted to explore the measurement qualities and factor structure of the MLQ, and to provide guidance for future scale development and refinement. In Study 1 (Wooderson-Perzan, 2000), a content adequacy assessment (see Schriesheim *et al.*, 1993) of the transformational leadership items was conducted. In study 2 (Wooderson-Perzan and Lunenburg, 2001) and in study 3 (Blair and Lunenburg, 2002), a series of confirmatory factor analyses, internal consistency estimates, and correlations were conducted on a revised set of transformational leadership items.

Study 1

Sample, Procedure, and Measure

Based on a procedure suggested by Schriesheim *et al.* (1993), a content adequacy assessment was conducted to examine the extent to which the transformational leadership items adequately represent the respective leadership dimensions. The sample consisted of 64 graduate educational administration students at a southwestern university.

Following Hinkin and Tracey (1999), who used graduate business students in their study, respondents in the current study rated each of the 39 transformational leadership items from Form 5-X of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Bass and Avolio, 1990) on the extent to which they believed the items were consistent with each of the four dimensions of transformational leadership. Response choices ranged from one (not at all) to five (completely). The definition of one of the four transformational

leadership dimensions was presented at the top of each page of the questionnaire, followed by a listing of all transformational leadership items. To control for response bias that may occur from order effects, four versions of the questionnaire were administered, each with the definitions presented in a different order. Extreme care was taken to ensure that the definitions were consistent with Bass and Avolio's (1994) conceptualization of the four transformational leadership dimensions. Table I presents the definitions used for this assessment.

Insert Table I here.

Analyses

To identify those items that were appropriately categorized, an analysis of variance procedure was employed. First, the mean score for each item on each of the four transformational leadership scales was calculated. Then, a comparison of means was conducted for each item across the four definitions to identify those items that were evaluated appropriately (i.e. statistically significantly higher on the appropriate definition utilizing *t*-tests; $p < 0.05$). It was felt that the sample size was quite adequate for assessing the practical significant differences between the means.

Results

The results from the content adequacy analysis revealed that 24 of the 39 items were classified correctly. These results provided some support for the Four Is, as three idealized influence items, five inspirational motivation items, eight intellectual

stimulation items, and eight individualized consideration items were judged to reflect the proposed leadership dimension. Table II presents the mean ratings for all items.

Insert Table II here.

Studies 2 and 3

Sample

The sample for Study 2 consisted of 207 superintendents and 464 principals (Wooderson-Perzan & Lunenburg, 2001). The sample for Study 3 included 170 principals and 277 teachers (Blair & Lunenburg, 2002).

Procedure and Measure

The authors administered questionnaires to respondents by mail. Of the usable questionnaires (62 percent) were returned. There were no significant mean differences between the two sub-samples on any of the variables used in this study. Therefore, all analyses were based on a total sample of 693 cases. All participants responded on a voluntary basis and were assured that responses would remain confidential.

The 39 items that comprise the transformational leadership measures of the MLQ were administered to all respondents. However, only the reduced set of items from Study 1 (24 items) was retained for further analysis.

Analyses

First, a confirmatory factor analysis of the 24 items was conducted using LISREL 8.03 (Joreskog and Sorbom, 1993). Internal consistency reliabilities (Cronbach's alpha)

were then computed for each of the revised factors. Finally, correlations among the revised scales were computed to examine the relationships among the dimensions.

Results

Results from a confirmatory factor analysis of the revised scales supported a three-factor model. Using the sample variance-covariance matrix as input and a maximum likelihood solution, the overall chi-square was statistically significant (x^2=164.00;$p < 0.01$), the goodness of fit index was 0.93, the comparative fit index was 0.96, the normed fit index was 0.93, the non-normed fit index was 0.95, and the root mean square residual for the predicted minus observed correlation matrices was 0.07. Although the chi-square was statistically significant, this finding was not considered problematic, as this statistic is particularly sensitive to sample size (cf. Bollen, 1989). Moreover, all other indices provided convincing support for a three-factor model.

Descriptive statistics, internal consistency reliability estimates, and correlations among the revised transformational leadership scales are listed in Table III.

Insert Table III here

The internal consistency estimates were adequate (0.82 to 0.87) and the correlations among the revised transformational leadership scales were substantially lower than those found in previous research.

Discussion

The three factors supported by the confirmatory factor analyses in Study 2 and Study 3 appear to be consistent with three of the "Four Is" proposed by Bass. However, a

close inspection of the items revealed a narrower behavioral operationalization of transformational leadership, suggesting that MLQ dimensions are too broadly defined as shown in Table IV.

Insert Table IV here

Perhaps it is time to de-emphasize the importance of idealized influence (charisma) as a component of transformational leadership and focus on specific, identifiable leadership behaviors.

This approach would be in agreement with Bennis and Nanus (1985), who studied 90 innovative leaders in industry and the public sector and found that articulating a vision of the future, emphasis on organizational and individual learning, and the development of commitment and trust were the factors that characterized transformational leaders; these results are very consistent with my own. Similarly, Yukl (1994) describes transformational leadership influencing major changes in organization members and building commitment for the organization's objectives. Together, these studies should lead us to question whether we should expect to find charismatic leaders in typical school organizations.

In conclusion, despite the shortcomings of the MLQ, it appears that Bass and his colleagues have identified several leader behaviors that appear to be components of transformational leadership. The current study demonstrated empirical support for three behaviorally oriented dimensions of transformational leadership that are consistent with theoretical propositions. The first dimension, intellectual stimulated, might be more

appropriately defined as non-traditional approaches to problems. The second dimension, individualized consideration, may be better thought of as individualized development. Dimension three, inspirational motivation, might be better described as articulating a future orientation.

There are several important leadership implications of this study. Previous research has found transformational leadership to be positively correlated with satisfaction with the leader, effectiveness of the leader, role clarity, mission clarity, and openness of communication (Hinkin and Tracey, 1994, 1999). Charisma may not be relevant for leaders in stable organizational environments but the three other dimensions may be very important in achieving the aforementioned outcomes. Thus, educational leaders should communicate a sense of where the organization is going, develop the skill and abilities of subordinates, and encourage innovative problem solving. It is these leadership behaviors that can truly transform organizations. In contrast, crisis may be a necessary precondition for idealized influence (II; charisma) to emerge, when dissatisfaction is high and value congruence and unquestioned obedience are needed to ensure organizational survival. This line of thinking is consistent with several contingency theories of leadership proposing that individuals must modify their behavior to fit the situation or find a situation that fits their leadership style (e.g. Evans, 1970; Fiedler, 1967; House, 1971). Clearly, studying transformational leadership in turbulent environments might lead to better understanding of idealized influence (charismatic leadership), as implied by studies by Bycio *et al.* (1995) and Keller (1992).

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Table 1

Definitions of Transformational Leadership Dimensions

Idealized influence (II) Transformational leaders behave in ways that result in their being a role model for their followers. The leaders are admired, respected, and trusted. Followers identify with the leaders and want to emulate them. Among the things the leader does to earn this credit is considering the needs of others over his or her own personal needs. The leader shares risk with followers and is consistent rather than arbitrary. He or she can be counted on to do the right thing, demonstrating high standards of ethical and moral conduct. He or she avoids using power for personal gain and only when needed.

Inspirational motivation (IM) Transformational leaders behave in ways that motivate and inspire those around them by providing meaning and challenge to their followers' work. Team spirit is aroused. Enthusiasm and optimism are displayed. The leader gets followers involved in envisioning attractive future states. The leader creates clearly communicated expectations that followers want to meet and also demonstrates commitment to goals and shared vision

Intellectual stimulation (IS). Transformational leaders stimulate their followers' efforts to be innovative and creative by questioning assumptions, reframing problems, and approaching old situations in new ways. Creativity is encouraged. There is no public criticism of individual members' mistakes. New ideas and creative problem solutions are solicited from followers, who are included in the process of addressing problems and

(*Table 1 continues*)

Table I

Definitions of Transformational Leadership Dimensions (Continued)

finding solutions. Followers are encouraged to try new approaches, and their ideas are not criticized because they differ from the leaders' ideas

Individualized consideration (IC).Transformational leaders pay special attention to each individual's needs for achievement and growth by acting as coach or mentor. Followers and colleagues are developed to successively higher levels of potential. The individually considerate leader listens effectively. The leader delegates tasks as a means of developing followers. Delegated tasks are monitored to see if the followers need additional direction or support and to assess progress; ideally, followers do not feel they are being checked.

Table II

Mean Ratings from Content Validity for Study 2 and Study 3

Item	II	IM	IS	IC
II1	3.99	3.90	2.84	3.16
IM1	3.98	**4.39**	3.29	3.66
IS1	2.99	3.09	**4.69**	3.03
IC1	3.30	2.84	3.84	**4.67**
II2	3.90	4.39	3.29	3.50
IM2	3.01	4.34	4.36	3.14
IS2	2.84	2.80	**4.59**	3.01
IC2	3.51	3.08	3.73	**4.59**
II3	3.91	4.27	3.02	3.79
IM3	3.53	**4.68**	3.22	3.40
IS3	2.90	3.03	**5.06**	3.45
IC3	3.43	2.51	3.01	**4.78**
II4	**4.78**	2.81	2.60	3.01
IM4	3.70	**4.64**	3.30	3.91
IS4	2.51	2.72	**4.69**	2.81
IC4	3.30	2.81	3.21	**4.84**
II5	4.40	4.03	2.82	3.12
IM5	3.99	4.03	3.82	4.43
IS5	2.91	2.68	**4.69**	3.06
IC5	3.21	3.05	3.22	**4.87**

II6	**3.98**	3.01	2.37	2.62
IM6	3.20	3.09	2.34	3.76
IS6	2.81	3.03	**4.69**	3.31
IC6	3.60	2.91	3.43	**4.79**
II7	3.56	4.27	2.99	3.26
IM7	3.54	**4.59**	3.21	3.36
IS7	3.24	3.22	4.67	**4.43**
IC7	3.29	3.09	3.46	3.52
II8	3.56	3.37	2.69	3.02
IM8	3.01	341	2.64	3.23
II9	3.38	4.78	2.66	3.11
IM9	3.44	**4.98**	3.01	2.65
IS8	2.78	2.91	**4.89**	3.35
IC8	3.42	2.66	3.70	**4.93**
II10	**4.53**	3.63	3.01	3.27
IM10	4.21	3.87	2.98	3.06
IS9	2.76	2.63	**4.96**	3.01
IC9	3.36	2.96	2.86	**4.58**
IS10	3.37	3.12	3.09	3.01

Table III

Means, Standard Deviations, Internal Consistency Reliability Estimates, and Correlations Among Revised MLQ Scales

Mean	SD	α	1	2	3	4	5
1. IM	2.27	1.11	0.87				
2. IS	2.17	0.93	0.81	0.66			
3. IC	1.74	1.15	0.86	0.66	0.69		

Note: Correlations 0.26 and above are significant at $p < 0.01$; IM = inspirational motivation; IS = intellectual stimulation; IC = individualized consideration

Table IV

Questionnaire items from the multifactor leadership questionnaire

Idealized influence
1. Talks to us about his/her most important values and beliefs
5. Emphasizes the importance of being committed to our beliefs
9. Specifies the importance of having a strong sense of purpose
17. Displays conviction in his/her ideals, beliefs, and values
25. Clarifies the central purpose underlying our actions
29. Talks about how trusting each other can help us to overcome our difficulties
31. Emphasizes the importance of having a collective sense of mission
13. Considers the moral and ethical consequences of his/her actions
21. Takes a stand on difficult issues
35. Behaves in ways that are consistent with his/her expressed values

Inspirational motivation
2. Sets high standards
6. Envisions exciting new possibilities
18. Provides continuous encouragement
22. Focuses my attention on "what it takes" to be successful
30. Makes me aware of essential work-related issues
36. Shows determination to accomplish what he/she sets out to do
14. Expresses his/her confidence that we will achieve our goals
10. Talks optimistically about the future
26. Talks enthusiastically about what needs to be accomplished
32. Articulates a compelling vision of the future

Intellectual stimulation
27. Encourages me to express my ideas and opinions
39. Encourages addressing problems by using reasoning and evidence, rather than unsupported opinion
15. Questions the traditional ways of doing things
3. Emphasizes the value of questioning assumptions
7. Re-examines critical assumptions to question whether they are appropriate
11. Encourages us to rethink ideas which had never been questioned
19. Seeks differing perspectives when solving problems
23. Suggests new ways to look at problems from different angles
33. Gets me to look at problems from different angels
37. Encourages non-traditional thinking to deal with traditional problems

Individualized consideration
28. Teaches me how to identify the needs and capabilities of others
4. Treats me as an individual rather than just a member of a group
16. Focuses me on developing my strengths
24. Treats each of us as individuals with different needs, abilities and aspirations
34. Promotes self-development
38. Gives personal attention to members who seem neglected

(Table IV continues)

Table IV

Questionnaire Items from the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire

8. ***Listens attentively to my concerns***
12. ***Provides useful advice for my development***
20. ***Spends time teaching and coaching me***

Note: Number denotes item number on questionnaire. Items in italics were retained as a result of content validity analysis.

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